1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

Frogtown and Currytown

361 WITHIN THE WESTERN LIMITS OF SAVANNAH ARE
133 Frogtown and Currytown, through which flows Musgrove
Creek, narrow and sluggish, on its way from "Big Ogeechee"
(342) to the red Savannah River. These are two poor communi-
(363) ties, as can be seen from the paintless little houses on dirt
streets that often lack sidewalks. With the canal cutting
the center of the district, there is scant space for gardens;
(351) but in spite of this, there are small patches of earth green
with collards and turnips, and almost every "stoop" is deco-
rated with a row of plants in tins of assorted dimensions.

.887 During week days, with many persons away at work in
other sections of the city, it is mostly the old who are found
at home. Grandmothers and grandfathers "mind" the small
children while the mothers work out.

115 One old woman, Anna Miller,* had lived most of her youth
on a Butler Island plantation, where some of the older work-
ers had occupied the same cabins given to them before eman-
cipation.

"Sebral uh dem hans wuz bery ole people," said Anna Miller. "Dey speak a funny language an none uh duh res ub us couldn hahdly unuhstan a wud dey say. Dey hab special name fuh all kine uh ting, but duh only ting I kin membuh is dat dey call a watuh bucket a 'juba haltuh'."

262 We found here, too, that in certain households certain
777 foods are considered to bring bad luck.

"I dohn eat peanuts," Millie McKen** told us, "an I dohn let a soul in muh fambly eat em."

* *Anna Miller, 1018 Cuyler Street, Currytown.*
** *Millie McKen, 409 West Duffy Street, Currytown.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

Children are expected from Sea Island marriages, whether they are the couple's own or just living with them. Children are highly prized regardless of the financial condition of the parents, and abortion is rare and generally viewed as an abomination against God and nature. If a young couple joins a parent's household, rather than establishing a new one, the elder members of the family usually take responsibility for the care and discipline of the children. Many elderly residents, the guardians of several generations of children, attribute their longevity and good health to the belief that they *cannot* die until all the children for whom they are responsible are grown and able to care for themselves, or until their responsibilities are delegated to someone else. Some children are reared by sisters, aunts, uncles, or even distant cousins. It is not unusual for a child to reach adulthood living not more than a block from the natural parent but residing with another relative, who is perhaps childless or more financially secure. Even children born out of wedlock generally know who their fathers and grandparents are. These children are given the same respect in the community as legitimate children and are as likely to be reared by the paternal side of the family as by the maternal side.[45]

The church is probably the most important social organization in the Sea Island communities. Outwardly, the Sunday services follow the patterns prescribed for Baptist and Methodist churches and are thus based on Christian doctrine. Some of the beliefs of black Christians in the Sea Islands are quite distinctive. For example, I have heard many elderly residents speak of a tripartite division of the human being into body, soul, and spirit, whereas Christian doctrine teaches that a person has only a body and a soul which is synonymous with the spirit. According to many elderly island residents, when one dies, only the soul returns to the kingdom of God. The body and spirit remain on earth. And although the soul of the dead person cannot harm the living, the spirit can, at will, cause another to harm him- or herself.[46]

This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living, is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-S (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

178 fewer and fewer places to collectively express their
887 wisdom and their traditions. With the testimonial meetings no longer taking place at the small praise houses, they gather in the larger churches or in the senior citizen centers. But as they explain, "You can't feel yourself in such a large place," or, "You can't really shout on a cement floor covered with carpet." And who will help the younger people recognize and value the strength and beauty in the older forms of cultural expression?

When we were on the islands in December 1987, we went to a Christmas party for senior citizens from centers on each of the five islands—about two hundred people, all from the older generation, attended. At each of these centers regular gatherings are held, and singing and sharing stories and remembrances are a vital part of the meetings. For all the interest of a wider public in sea island culture, it would seem that this kind of gathering in the community on a regular basis is the most encouraging thing of all.

887 Even more important, what these elders
86 know must be readily accessible to the children and the younger people on the island. Surely in some homes and in some churches it is. It would be wonderful if it were also part of the school system. Mrs. Hunter is occasionally invited to a school in the Charleston area to share what she knows, but as she explains, many older people know what she knows if only they were encouraged more actively to pass it on. In the Johns Island senior center Mrs. Maggie McGill has organized a group that includes her mother (Mrs. Maggie Russell) and others, all of whom are wise in the old ways. The Senior Lights have recently begun to give programs of sea island spirituals and shouts in the Charleston area. In February 1989 they represented the coastal region in a conference at the Smithsonian Institution focusing on congregational song and worship traditions in black communities.

219 One very encouraging development in the Charleston area is the work of the Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture. One of its goals is to maintain an archive of material from the Afro-American people of the lowcountry.

(+ NN-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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It houses several collections especially relevant to island residents, including the Esau Jenkins papers. In 1987 we placed more than sixty hours of recorded material, along with prints of Robert Yellin's masterful photographs at the center. We wanted people from the islands, as well as scholars, to have access to this material.

In 1963 Esau Jenkins told us:

> Now some of us, because we can read a little bit more, forget about the place we came from and some of the songs which help us go on. And when older folks sang those songs, it helped them realize they're trusting in God and reaching for a better day. We certainly wouldn't want the children to get away from it. We should cherish it, we should preserve it and keep it. . . .
>
> Now if we hide those sweet songs and try to get away from what we came from, what will we tell our children about the achievement we have made and the distance we have come?

In 1988 we noticed a plaque in the office of Bill Jenkins, Esau's oldest son and the administrator of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation:*

> A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtues to make history worth recording: and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great.

There really is treasure here—honey in the rock. Our hope is that it will always be a part of the islands and a source of strength to island people as they struggle with the pressures and challenges of the present and the future.

*The authors' royalties from the Brown Thrasher edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* are going to the Tree of Life Fund administered by the Comprehensive Health Care Corporation in support of cultural activities in the community.

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The elder Sea Islanders are active disciplinarians. Because of their roles as community disciplinarians coupled with the large number of households in which elders are primarily responsible for disciplining, elders will provide opportunity to assess the effect of age on disciplining pattern. Because of the status positions elders hold in Sea Island communities and because of the isolation factor, it can be anticipated that physical discipline would be found to be particularly prominent. Elder Sea Islanders may also report rather unique disciplining techniques which are either in present use, or which have become extinct. This possibility exists because the isolation of the Sea Island supports the retention of West African cultural patterns.

Some islands are more inaccessible than others. A measure of the effect of isolation on discipline patterns and techniques will be obtained through cross island comparisons. It is anticipated that there will be a linear relationship between degree of isolation and use of physical discipline.

ment for a creole language to survive.

Today, the language situation on the islands is complex. The communities are changing under the influx of commercialization, inter-island communication and improved educational facilities. No longer socially isolated, many inhabitants are becoming bilingual. They command both productive and receptive ability in English beyond that of speakers in earlier times. The nuclear family structure of the islands is such that the grandparents or some elder member is usually the established household spokesman, and assumes responsibility for rearing the children. As expected, there is evidence of creolization in the language of the younger generations. While many do not purport to actually speak the 'old time talk', they can and do use it in situations requiring them to be spontaneous (i.e. verbal attacks).

1.0. Focus of this study

The sociolinguistic pressures now exerted on the Sea Island communities match the general conditions that DeCamp (1971:351) has described for post-creole speech communities (i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with the standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and there is sufficient breakdown in the formerly